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Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card Fast Facts

The Golden State Advantage card is California's EBT card. It is similar to a bank debit card which provides a way for recipients to spend CalFresh benefits, California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) benefits, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) benefits, Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), and/or cash benefits administered by county governments. Each month benefits are deposited into the EBT account of individuals and families who qualify. Federal law requires that an EBT card can be used nationwide at point of sale devices or Automated Teller Machines (ATM) which display the Quest® mark.

Cash Benefits

- California law establishes CalWORKs as a welfare program which provides cash aid and services to eligible needy California families. The intent of the CalWORKs program is to assist in providing life sustaining necessities such as food, clothing and shelter.
- California EBT cardholders **cannot** access cash benefits at ATMs and POS devices in liquor stores that are not federally authorized to accept CalFresh benefits.
- Additionally, California EBT cardholders **cannot** access cash benefits at casinos, poker rooms, card rooms, adult entertainment businesses, bail bonds businesses, night clubs/saloons/taverns, bingo halls, race tracks, gun/ammunition stores, cruise ships, psychic readers, smoking shops, cannabis shops, tattoo/piercing shops, and spa/massage salons.
- California's EBT vendor has also deactivated cash access to EBT cardholders at some out-of-state casinos, adult entertainment establishments, and on cruise ships.

CalFresh Benefits

- CalFresh benefits are 100 percent federally funded. CalFresh benefits can be used to purchase food items such as breads, cereal, fruits, vegetables, meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, and seeds and plants that produce food for the household to eat.
- CalFresh benefits **cannot** be used to purchase non-food items such as pet food, soaps, paper products, household supplies, grooming items, cosmetics, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, vitamins, medicines, food that will be eaten in the store, or hot prepared food.

Restaurant Meals Program

- Under a Federal option some restaurants in select California counties are authorized to accept CalFresh benefits from homeless, elderly, and/or disabled persons to buy low-cost prepared meals. The Restaurant Meals Program is currently operating in Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, Tuolumne, and Santa Clara counties.

Benefits Used Outside California

- Regulations allow for individuals to be out-of-state for up to 30 days. Past the 30 days, counties are required to follow-up and inquire about the individual's absence from the state.
- All 58 California counties receive monthly reports that identify individuals who have performed their EBT transactions outside of California during a given month. This information is used by counties to investigate whether an individual is complying with eligibility requirements regarding residency in California.
- Various other EBT reports are generated for counties that provide information to better assist in identifying potential cases of fraud (e.g. out-of-state usage, excessive card replacement, etc.)

Links

[California Department of Social Services](#)

[California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids \(CalWORKs\)](#)

[CalFresh](#)

[California EBT Project Website](#)